THE WOMAN'S
DREADNOUGHT

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MOTHERS' PENSIONS: By Judge Neil, U.S.A.

CHARLIE ROSS OF 1916

Mrs. Ross was having a struggle with poverty. She had five children. Mr. Ross earned $13.50 a week. He would take two or three glasses of beer each day and spend 10 cents carfare to and from his work. This reduced the net amount of money for household expenses so low that Mrs. Ross found it impossible to pay $15 a month rent for a house in a respectable neighbourhood. She was grieving over the possible necessity of moving her family into a slum district, where rents were cheaper and surroundings filthy.

Christmas was near at hand and her little boy Charlie, who was his mother's great joy, a beautiful child all the neighbours said, wanted to see what Santa Claus would bring the children.

So Mrs. Ross washed and dressed Charlie in the best clothes she had for him and took him to the toy department of the Great Store.

Charlie eyed with wonder and longing heart the profusion of toys and playthings, and asked his mother if Santa Claus would bring him some.

Mrs. Rich was strolling through the toy department intending to select toys to be sent to poor children. She heard Charlie's voice pleading for Santa to bring him some toys. Mrs. Rich asked Charlie's mother about her boy and begged to be allowed to send him toys. Mrs. Ross consented and gave her name and address to Mrs. Rich.

On Christmas day the toys arrived at the Ross home.

Mrs. Rich on the same day looked out of the window to the landscape and snow-tipped trees. She had no children of her own. Her arms felt empty and she longed to have the companionship of a child. She thought of the boy she had seen in the store. A Charity Visitor call d to get the promised donation for the poor. Mrs. Rich told the Visitor of her desire for a child and spoke of the boy she had seen in the store the day before.

The next day the charity expert sent a Friendly Visitor to Mrs. Ross to find out about her home conditions. The visitor questioned Mrs. Ross and learned that Mr. Ross drank beer and that the family was poor.

Mr. Ross was summoned into the Court of Domestic Relations and was tried. The Friendly Visitor testified that the family was poor and that the defendant spent money for beer. Mr. Ross was sent to the house of correction for a year for contributing to the delinquency of his children.

Soon after the New Year, Mrs. Ross was summoned into the Juvenile Court on a petition of the Friendly Visitor and charged with being unable to provide food and clothing for her children. The judge ordered that her boy Charlie be taken away from her and turned over to the charity society for adoption.

Mrs. Ross was told that this was done in order to relieve her of part of her burden as she could not earn the living for her five children. She was told that she could now try to get along with four.

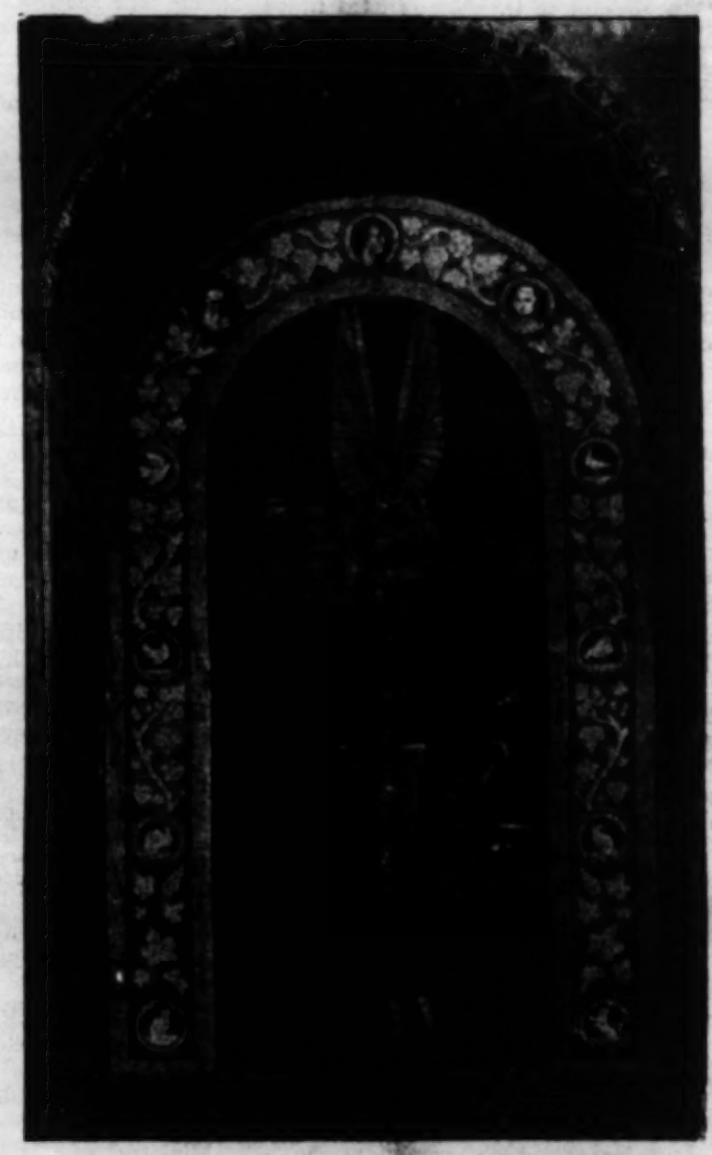
Soon Mrs. Rich was notified that a healthy boy was deserted by his parent and could be legally adopted by someone able to care for him. Mrs. Rich asked to have the boy sent to her home for inspection and asked if she would be bothered by his mother if she adopted him. The Charity Expert informed her that under the Juvenile Court law it is a criminal offence for anyone to give the real mother any information of the whereabouts of her child after it has been taken away from her by the Juvenile Court and given out for adoption.

Mrs. Rich looked the boy over and discovered that he was the boy for whom she bought the toys.

Another Christmas has come. Charlie now has all the toys any child could desire and is known as "William Rich." Mrs. Rich is known as one of the large contributors to organised charity.

Mrs. Ross is dead.

POSTLUDE.—Forty years ago Charlie Ross, a boy four years of age, was kidnapped from his parents' home in Philadelphia. Mr. and Mrs. Ross spent their entire fortune in a fruitless search for their boy. They died three years ago without learning anything about him.



By Joseph E. Southall.

THE RETURN OF PEACE

The W.S.F. has arranged the following meetings to be addressed by Judge Neil on the Mothers' Pension Scheme:—

April 17th, Memorial Hall, 8 p.m., Judge Neil, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Dr. B. Tchaykovsky.

May 6th, Lees Hall, Canning Town, 7 p.m., Judge Neil, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Mrs. Drake.

April 22nd, Leicester; April 23rd, Huddersfield; April 24th, York; April 29th, Merthyr and Aberdare, joint with I.L.P. Other provincial meetings under consideration.

EDUCATION

The "Daily Chronicle" reports that the scheme to be put forward by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, will include the following proposals:—

Raising the school-leaving age.

Compulsory attendance of boys until 18 at continuation schools.

Increase of teachers' salaries.

Better provision to be made for the training of teachers, each area to be responsible for its quota, and the training to be linked up with the University Colleges.

The "Chronicle" adds that to meet the shortage of men teachers boys and girls under 11 years will probably be taught in mixed classes by women teachers boys over 11 being taught separately by men: also that the Board of Education will probably demand a voice in fixing the teachers salaries paid by local authorities.

If this forecast is to be relied on it would seem that Mr. Fisher is not an advocate of co-education, and that he regards the education of girls as a secondary matter, as he suggests compulsory attendance at continuation schools for boys only and not for girls.

* * * *

Our good wishes to the Stockton pacifist, Mr. Edward Backhouse.

THE WATERLOO ROAD

"The Times and other militarist organs, which are endeavouring to force the nation on to an inclined plane leading to the State Regulation of Vice have been devoting much space to descriptions of alleged unseemly conduct in the Waterloo Road.

Last Saturday night the Strand was thronged as usual with men and women, and as the War has made the rule, the men were for the most part dressed in khaki. There were soldiers walking alone, or with other men, there were soldiers accompanied by women, just as there always are. The throng came and went in many directions, and some of the people turned into the Waterloo Road, which is dingier and more dimly lit than the Strand.

It was a dreary night, biting cold, a light fog, like a haze from the river, hung upon the air. The river was wonderful, but its spell could not fall upon the crowd, for it is hidden to all except the few who pause, craning on tiptoe to gaze over the high dark ballustrade. At the corner of the bridge a policeman stood watching the people. When women passed he seemed to sway towards them alert and full of menace. They hesitated, faltering in their gait, and as his glance fell upon us our own steps faltered, too.

On one of the seats in the alcoves of the bridge was a merry party—two sailors and two women—opening packets of sandwiches and cake to make a meal. In another alcove a group of men sat talking, in another a man and woman were together in silence clasping hands.

Over the bridge, in the Waterloo Road, police constables and specials met one at almost every step, but they seemed to have nothing to do.

It was an uncheerful place, the paint-smudged lamps threw out a dismal light. As the crowd moved past, some hurrying on, some in silence, some lingering to talk, one saw an occasional woman standing alone on the edge of the pavement or close against the wall. Just as one chose, one might have imagined her to be a workless and homeless outcast, or what Sir A. Conan Doyle would call a "Harpy," or merely a humdrum and respectable woman waiting for a 'bus or a friend. Generally she seemed in the dimness poorly dressed, forlorn, and no longer young, but perhaps this was because the dreary surroundings were casting their gloom on her as on all else.

Two soldiers passed together, and behind them two girls laughing noisily. One might have imagined that they were trying to attract attention, but probably it was just their way.

A poor, battered creature who looked more than fifty years of age, stood railing in high-pitched tones, "You—you, you'll be getting me locked up." Over and over again she said it, but no one noticed her. Was she drunk or demented? We passed her; then turned, fearing that her prediction would come true, and that one of the many policemen would take her into custody. As we stood, a soldier came briskly towards us: involuntarily we shrank away from him and walked away.

Suddenly a crowd gathered, tall helmeted policemen were in the centre, special constables on the outskirts were urging the people to move on. A voice called, "Get away from me, get away from me. I've lost a leg at the front, where you ought to be." Women and girls were ringing their hands and crying and protesting. "They are treading on him and he's got eight wounds and only one leg. Oh, they are treading on him." A one-legged soldier was lying on his back on the pavement. The police had taken away his crutches. They lifted him on to an ambulance, and wheeled him off; a part of the crowd went with them. Was the man drunk? Had there been a quarrel? No one could tell us.

A group of soldiers and sailors and women came out of a public house. The men were drunk and staggering, the women sober enough. "Good-night, see you to-morrow," they said in chorus. A woman patted one of the sailors on the cheek, then the men reeled off round the corner and the women walked straight on.

In all this there was nothing that punishment could cure.

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A CRUEL WARRANT

The long-expected Royal Warrant to relieve the present unhappy state of naval and military War victims has at length appeared. It establishes some improvements, but, nevertheless, is a disappointing, even a cruelly insulting document, for it leaves the disabled men and their families still without rights, still completely at the mercy of arbitrary officialdom, which interprets as it pleases each of the still appalling vague rules.

Says the new warrant:—

"Pensions to the widows, children, and dependants of deceased soldiers shall not be claimed as a right, but shall be given as a reward of service, and no pension shall be granted or continued to a widow or dependant who, in the opinion of our Minister of Pensions, is unworthy of our Royal favour, and it shall be in the power of our Minister of Pensions to terminate or suspend any pension that may have been granted to such persons, or to provide for its administration under such conditions as he may determine, and his decision in any case shall be final."

In these words is embodied the spirit in which the authorities approach the question of making what amends are possible to those whose lives have been wrecked by service in the War. The clause refers only to the wives and families of the disabled. Perhaps it was thought too extreme to be applied openly to the men who have fought in the Services, but in the case of the soldiers and sailors also, at any rate until after the final pension is granted, the authorities possess, and exercise, the same power to reduce, suspend, or withdraw pensions at will.

The improvements in the promised scale of pensions are discounted by the rising cost of living, but a number of provisions are introduced which would considerably ease the situation if they could be administered as brothers and sisters should treat each other, but, alas! the schedule of pensions to be granted for specific injuries entirely disposes of any such hope. The pension of a disabled soldier or sailor may be 27s. 6d. a week, with 5s. for the first child, 4s. 2d. for the second, 3s. 4d. for the third, and 2s. 6d. for each additional child. But only a small minority of the disabled men will receive these sums, for the pension of 27s. 6d. is only given to men who have lost two or more limbs (oh, gruesome phrase!), a limb and an eye, both hands, a hand and foot, all fingers and thumbs, or who are totally blind, totally paralysed, permanently bedridden or insane, or in the advanced stages of an incurable disease. The loss of both feet, the complete amputation of a leg or right arm, or total loss of speech only entitles a man to 22s. For total deafness, a left arm or short thigh amputation, the pension is 19s. 3d. The loss of the right arm below the elbow provides 16s. 6d. The amputation of a leg below the knee or a left arm below the elbow, 13s. 9d.; the thumb or four fingers of the right hand, 11s., and so on down to the loss of two fingers, recompensed at 5s. 6d.

The children's allowances are proportionately reduced, so that the poor little children whose father has lost his speech or his right arm below the elbow, and thus only gets 13s. 9d., will have just half the allowances of the children whose father has lost a left arm and an eye.

These are, indeed, measured pensions, measured cruelly and absurdly by sections of human bodies! How is it possible to measure suffering and disability by such methods?

In all individuals the shock of wounds or amputation will not produce equally strong effects, and all will not possess the same degree of power to adapt themselves to their disablement. Temperament, general physique and constitution, and the pre-war occupation must all be taken into account. To a commercial traveller or auctioneer, speech and hearing are of first importance; to a coal-heaver or pianist the use of the hands. The Royal Warrant makes some show of coping with these difficulties by providing that:

"Any disabled soldier under Article I. of this Our Warrant who makes application and shows that the minimum pension, with children's allowances (if any), which he has been granted, together with the average earnings (if any) of which he is judged capable, shall not exceed his pre-War earnings up to a maximum of 50s. a week, plus half of any pre-War earnings between 50s. and 100s. a week."

The phrases "earnings of which he remains capable" and "of which he is judged capable" render this clause valueless to the man whose disability has been underestimated by the authorities, who have under-pensioned him on the ground that he is *capable* of earning a certain amount, even though no employer may be willing to pay it to him. This clause, if properly administered, which like all else is doubtful, will increase the pensions of those who were comfortably placed before the War, especially if they happen to be personally known to members of the local War Pensions Committee. A soldier's widow, whom we know, and who has been active in working to secure improvements for the pensioners, was offered a supplementary allowance though she had no special claim to it. She refused it, explaining that she wished to secure improvements, not for herself personally, but for all.

The nation has not yet learnt the unwisdom of the rule that "to him who hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath." The children whose father earned little because of his poor constitution have inherited his feebleness, and require more nourishment than the children of a successful man, but the Royal Warrant takes no account of this fact.

BROKEN MEN.

The piteous plight of the masses of men whose health has been wrecked by War service is scarcely relieved by the Warrant, and the tale of their misery and neglect will continue growing from day to day. The Warrant says that pensions may be granted to those whose disability is "attributable to or aggravated by" War service.

Two and a half years of War have taught the country how harshly such phrases are interpreted by the Naval and Military authorities. In a case which has come to our knowledge, pension has been refused on the ground that the man's illness has not been caused by military service, although the Military Medical Officer who passed him as fit for service has given him a certificate stating that the man was not suffering from the disease at the time when he passed him into the Army.

It appears to be a self-evident fact that if the Medical Officers are capable men who do their duty, all medical unfitness sufficient to cause a man's discharge must, at least, have been *aggravated* by war service. But the authorities will not have it so, because, as they admit, it would cost perhaps 70 million pounds to give these men the pensions they are entitled to. Therefore it is laid down that pension shall be refused to men—and their number runs into many thousands—whom the authorities refuse to class as eligible. But if the unfitness of these men is not due to their own neglect or misconduct a gratuity or temporary pension may be made to them subject to such conditions as the Ministry of Pensions may determine. Only in exceptional circumstances shall the gratuity amount to as much as £100. A grant not exceeding £200 may be substituted for pension "in any case where the degree of disablement is assessed at less than 20 per cent., *or where it is considered more in the interests of the soldier.*" The soldier's consent or opinion need not be asked. This provision would enable the authorities to terminate any man's pension by a grant not exceeding £200! But indeed the authorities are all-powerful: the men and their families are allowed no rights! The one definite pledge made is that where a man has been granted a permanent pension it will not be altered because of any change in his earning capacity. Will this pledge be kept?

Whilst waiting for his pension to be settled (and we know how long they wait) a soldier and his family are to subsist on 14s. a week—the fixing of this paltry sum is a sufficient indication that the pensions will in most cases be very small.

WIDOWS' PENSIONS.

A widow may be granted half the soldier's pension (*i.e.*, 13s. 9d. for a private's widow), with 1s. 3d. a week extra when she reaches the age of 45, and allowances for her children of 5s., 4s. 2d., 3s. 4d., and 2s. 6d. for each additional child, provided that her husband died of wounds or injuries received on military duty within seven years of receiving them, or died within seven years of disease "certified as contracted, or commencing on, or substantially aggravated by active service," and not due to the man's neglect or misconduct.

If the death is "neither attributable to military service nor substantially aggravated by such service," and not due to the man's neglect or misconduct, the widow may have 10s. a week during the war and for 12 months afterwards. It will be seen by the provision that the disease must have been "*substantially* aggravated" by war service (not merely "aggravated," as in the case of disabled men), that a widow's pension will be obtained with even greater difficulty than that of a disabled man. It is a monstrous thing that the widow and children of the broken man, whom all but the Naval or Military authorities admit to have died through war service, are to be put off with 10s. a week lasting only until twelve months after the War.

A widow whose husband was in receipt of a pension of more than 10s. a week, but whose death is not held to be due to, or substantially aggravated by war service, may receive half his pension, provided "she was living with him at the time of his death." If he died in a hospital or asylum, will she be disqualified?

Widows who were separated from their husbands, "provided the marriage took place at a time entitling a widow to a pension," may have a pension up to the amount contributed by the husband, provided that it shall not exceed 10s. a week, and allowances for the children. This exclusion from pensions of separated wives married before the widows' pensions were instituted is intolerably unjust. The imposition of a 10s. maximum is also quite indefensible. For our part we have always urged that where a soldier applies for separation allowance for his wife, it should be granted without question as to how or where they were living. If the man is killed pension should be extended to all who drew separation allowance.

An unmarried widow is to have 10s. a week and allowances for the children; if there are no children of the soldier or sailor in her charge she is to have 10s. a week till twelve months after the War. Here again we consider that since the man regarded the woman as his wife, the authorities should not distinguish against her.

PARENTS

Parents of men whose death was due to, or aggravated by war service, may receive up to 15s. a week. If the parents are incapable of supporting themselves owing to age or infirmity the question of pre-War dependence will not be insisted upon, but though several sons have been killed, no more than 15s. a week will be paid. This is a dishonest provision.

MILITARISING THE CHILDREN?

Very serious consideration should be given to the following sub-sections, and the Pensions Minister should be closely questioned as to what action is contemplated under them:—

Part I., Clause 2, iii.: "In any case in which, in the opinion of the Minister of Pensions, it may become necessary to secure the proper care of a child on behalf of which an allowance is payable, the allowance, instead of being paid to the parent, may be administered under such conditions as the Minister of Pensions may determine.

"iv. In the event of a parent being wholly or partially relieved of the charge of any child by its maintenance in the Army or Navy, or in any institution wholly or mainly supported from public funds, the allowance granted on account of that child may be reduced by the extent of that relief."

These clauses appear to seek control over the upbringing of pensioners' children; but, even "in War Time," there is, as yet, no power for the Government to remove children from the custody of their parents unless the Courts declare that the parents are unfit guardians. Therefore it is unlikely that the Pensions Minister intends to remove children from their parents by force, though in regard to widows whom busybodies on Local Committees may deem "unworthy," vigilance may be required. It is obvious, however, that the Ministry contemplates using the power of the purse to induce parents to have their children educated as and where the Ministry may think fit. Care should be taken that this power is not used to force the children of pensioners into the Army or Navy.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

PENSIONS CONFERENCE

The League of Rights for Soldiers' and Sailors' Wives and Relatives and the Poplar L.R.C. are calling a delegate conference on Naval and Military Pensions and Allowances on March 24th at the Essex Hall, Strand, W.C., at 3 p.m.

ELECTORAL REFORM

At a meeting of about 70 Liberal members of both Houses on March 6th, Sir J. Simon presiding, a resolution was unanimously passed in favour of a Bill being promptly introduced by the Government embodying the compromise on electoral reform arrived at by the Speaker's Conference.

* * * *

The "Daily Express" Lobby correspondent says: "Any hope there may have been of carrying the recommendations of the Speaker's electoral reform conference into effect was diminished yesterday. Practically all the Unionist M.P.s now in this country, including a few on short leave from the front, assembled to hear, in private, the explanations of the Unionist members of the conference. The meeting ended, however, without anything being done regarding the proposal that resolutions should be formulated for a debate in the House."

REVELATIONS FROM INDIA

INDENTURED LABOUR. COMPULSORY PROSTITUTION

"TO THE MOTHERS OF INDIA.

"Mothers!—I have seen with my own eyes the misery of your sisters in Fiji.

"They have come to me with tears days after day, in that distant land, and implored help in their sorrow:

"They have shown me their own children, living in the midst of squalor and vice. This shame may still continue unabated and new children be born into it, if our voices are not raised against it.

"In the name of sacred motherhood and innocent childhood, and by the memory of your sisters' tears, uplift to heaven your supplications, that this evil may be taken away from God's earth.

"C. F. ANDREWS."

This is a translation of a leaflet which was distributed at a meeting in Allahabad, India, held on January 23rd, 1917, to protest against the system of indentured labour under which Indian men and women are employed in Fiji. The question is of vital interest to us here in Britain: (1) Because it is the British Government which is responsible for this system; (2) because the British Government is introducing indentured labour to work behind the battle lines in France; (3) because the introduction of African and Asiatic indentured labour into this country is under discussion; and (4) because the industrial conscription of our own people is in prospect.

When Lord Hardinge ceased to be Viceroy, he promised that the indentured labour of Indians in the Tropics should cease, and expressed himself as proud to have been associated with the abolition of a system which had created so much shame and wrong.

The system, however, continues in full swing, and a campaign against it is being carried on in India. The following speech by Mr. C. F. Andrews, who is active in the campaign, was read at the Allahabad meeting on January 23rd, and reported in "The Tribune" of Lahore:—

A WOMAN KIDNAPPED.

A high-caste Hindustani lady of good family whom I met in Fiji, received a telegram late one evening telling her that her husband was seriously ill. She started at once for the railway station, and on her way was kidnapped and sent to the emigration depot in Calcutta. She was too frightened to answer the questions that were put to her, and found herself put on board ship and out on the open sea. Here amid the crowd of immigrants her modesty was assailed. She fled for protection to a Bengali gentleman who was going out as a clerk to Fiji. She told him her story. He placed her in charge of a respectable married coolie, asking him and his wife to take care of her. Thus she remained safe during the voyage. But as soon as ever the voyage was over she was separated from her protectors. The young Bengali gentleman had to go and take up his appointment at a place on the north of the island, a sea journey's distance. Meanwhile this Hindustani lady was put to do coolie plantation work and again and again her virtue was attempted. Days and nights of utter misery were passed. Then one day the Bengali clerk went down to the harbour to see the ship arrive from Suva. He was walking along the shore road when suddenly someone threw herself down at his feet. It was the Hindustani girl. She had escaped at last, with her honour still unstained. He took her back with him, and, as the one hope that was left, married her himself and paid the money needed for her release. There was no other course, if her virtue was to be preserved. It was a noble deed. Yet what a fate! Night and day the poor girl still laments her fate. She can never forget her home in Hindustan, which she will never see again. Here, then, is a true story of one of the many thousands of women who have been taken off to Fiji.

ENFORCED PROSTITUTION.

". . . It is fixed that one woman shall go out with every three men. A certain number of women go out with their husbands. The rest of the women for all practical purposes are divided among the men, and one woman has to be at the disposal of three or four or even five men. One overseer thus explained the system as he worked it on his estate. 'I first,' he said, 'separate off the married couples. And then I divide the rest of the women among the men, telling so many men that they must go to this or that woman. If I did not do this there would be endless sexual quarrels.'

"The results of such immoral conditions are hideous beyond words. This is the way a business resident of Fiji describes it in a New Zealand paper:—

" 'The Indian Immigration Ordinance declares every woman to be the vassal of four men. In consequence the moral life led by these people is depraved in the extreme, marriage laws being a thing unthought of. Their domestic habits are filthy beyond description, it being quite common to find twenty to thirty men, women, and children sleeping and eating in one room. Children become acquainted with sin and shame at a very early age. If we look at the criminal court lists, fully 90 per cent. of the crimes are Indian crimes. The leper station in Fiji has 300 patients, and again we find the Indians vastly predominating.'

CRIMINAL STATISTICS.

"In Fiji, among the indentured Indians, one in every 950 has committed suicide in each year, or, in other words, the suicide rate is twenty times as great as that of India, or of the two great recruiting provinces of India. In these provinces, there is only one conviction for murder for every 21 lakhs (a lakh is 100,000) of people each year. In Fiji, there has been one conviction in each year for every 3,000 persons, or a murder rate in Fiji 80 times as high as in India. It is noticeable, too, that the greater portion of the people murdered are women, whilst the majority of suicides are men. In 1914, out of 15,603 indentured coolies in Fiji, eleven committed suicide, ten were convicted of murder, seven were murdered, twenty-seven were convicted of the violent crime of wounding, thirteen were wounded, two were convicted of manslaughter, and three were killed by manslaughter. The number of coolies actually charged in the courts with comitting these crimes, together with those who suffered under them, amounted to nearly 100 persons, or one in every 140 of the adult indentured population of the colony were, in 1914, involved in violent crime, ending in murder, manslaughter, suicide, or violent bodily assault.

"These horrors have now been stereotyped by reason of the existence of indenture, which actually lays it down, in a Government code, that three men are allowed for every one woman.

EMPLOYERS HUSH UP CRIME.

"Listen to the following extract from the "Western Pacific Herald":—

" 'News has just reached Suva of another of those "cutting up" incidents so common amongst Indians in Fiji, which occurred on the Waidoi estate. In this case the motive is the usual one of jealousy, a woman being the victim and a man the aggressor. Although badly hacked the woman is expected to recover. We understand that the owners of the estate were aware the trouble was brewing, but were prevented by the regulations from removing the man to another plantation, which action would have prevented the crime. Another aspect of the case is that if the assailant is sentenced to more than six months, his employers suffer by losing the time, as the indenture cannot be extended for a longer period than six months. The law as it stands has an undoubted tendency to encourage the employer to hush up any such cases which may occur amongst his labourers.'

"The corruption of morals does not end with the indentured population. It has involved even the free Indians.

"Gentlemen, here are the facts that I have laid before you in all their naked horror; I have seen these things with my own eyes and my heart has bled at the sight. For these people, who have been reduced to such a condition, were a few years before the simple, harmless Indian villagers whom we all know and love. The fault is not theirs that they have come to such a pass. It is the fault of the system which has made them its victims and for whose continuance the Government of India are alone responsible. What we claim and demand is one simple, obvious thing—*the immediate abolition of the whole system.* If a man is suffering agonies from a rodent cancer, we do not trifle with it and we do not put on sweet smelling ointment or soothing poultices; we set our most skilled surgeons to cut it out. Gentlemen, this system of indenture is a moral cancer, a hideous leprosy eating into the very life of India itself. The only remedy is to cut it out—and to do so at once."

THE INDIAN ARMY ALLOWANCE.

Young Indian men with a University education are invited to enlist in the Punjab Double Company. "Provided they serve the Government most loyally and faithfully," graduates may claim separation allowances for their families of 26s. 8d. a month; undergraduates 16s. 8d. a month. Will they praise the Empire for its generosity?

NOTES ON THE CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

CLAUSE I.—We suggest that Clause I. should be amended to provide that any person, not of the age of sixteen, as in the Bill, but of 21 years or over who commits an act of indecency with a girl or boy under the age of 18 years shall be liable to imprisonment; and it shall be no defence to a charge under this section to prove that the girl or boy consented to the act of indecency. Any boy or girl of 16 to 21 years who commits an act of indecency with a boy or girl of 16 years or under shall be liable to a term of detention at a Borstal Institution or reformatory, or shall be placed on probation for a suitable period. We urge that cases in which children under 16 are concerned shall be tried in the Juvenile Court. The Bill only protects girls. We would make the protection equal for boys and girls.

CLAUSE II.—We are opposed to Clause II., and urge its deletion for the following reasons: The difficulty of determining which of the parties concerned has communicated a venereal disease will be extreme, and miscarriages of justice are most likely to occur. Husbands who infect their wives and children will not be prosecuted, as wives will not inform against their husbands for economic and other reasons. Where persons who have irregular sexual intercourse are concerned it is difficult for the woman to secure impartial treatment, as the law is against her and the prevailing prejudice is opposed to her. So long as prostitution continues, venereal disease will result; men and women must either refrain from it or accept the risk. The law only recognises soliciting as an offence when practised by women, and women may be convicted of this offence on the unsupported evidence of a single policeman. The man to whom the solicitation has been addressed is not called on to give evidence. It should be remembered that policemen obtain promotion for securing convictions. There is abundant opportunity for the miscarriage of justice in regard to these cases. We are opposed to extending the punishment meted out to women who may be convicted of soliciting on the slightest evidence. We are opposed to a compulsory physical examination, and we point out that the provision that a woman may be examined by a woman doctor is not likely to be carried out, if left in permissive form, as prisoners may not know of this provision, and they are usually afraid to insist upon their rights. In most prisons there is no woman doctor on the staff. We much regret that the Local Government Board scheme of free voluntary treatment at venereal clinics has not been given a sufficient period of trial before resorting to legislation such as that contained in this Bill. We are of opinion that this problem, which is largely an economic one, cannot be solved by punishment. Moreover, we believe that this Clause is a step towards the State regulation of prostitution and the compulsory registration of prostitutes, to which we are strongly opposed; we desire prostitution to disappear, and believe that State regulation will tend to maintain it and to produce in men who consort with prostitutes a false sense of security in so doing.

CLAUSE II, SECTION 4, appears to indicate that persons entering other institutions than prisons may have notice that they are suffering from venereal disease served upon them and used in evidence against them; thus inmates of hospitals and Poor Law Institutions may be subject to regulations and the risk of penalties which persons able to pay for private treatment may escape.

We urge the deletion of the whole of Clause II., but should the House refuse to do so, we suggest that it should be amended so as to provide that the proposed punishment for communicating venereal disease shall only be imposed in the case of those who have infected children or young persons under 18 years, or the wife or husband of the person alleged to have committed the offence.

SECTIONS 3 and 4 of CLAUSE II. give power to make compulsory physical examination in certain cases: we urge the deletion of these Sections.

CLAUSE IV.—Brothels are only kept for profit. The practice should, therefore, be made unprofitable. We suggest that premises which have been used for this purpose should stand empty for 12 months. We urge that Clause IV. be amended so as to provide for this.

CLAUSE V.—As long as imprisonment is to be employed in regard to any form of sexual offence, we think that punishment should be meted out with greater regard to justice. The terms of imprisonment suggested by the Bill are small, having regard to the greater gravity of the offence as compared with those for soliciting; we therefore suggest the imposition of imprisonment for all third and subsequent convictions of brothel keeping, and that the fine for the second offence be raised to £500. The authorities have already power to punish brothel keepers, but as these are only used occasionally, it may be necessary for the safeguarding of children to add a new clause giving power to punish those responsible in cases where young persons under the age of 18 are present for the purpose of prostitution, and to give power to the police to enter any such premises for the purpose of determining whether young persons under the age of 18 are upon the premises, women police accompanying those who make the investigation.

CLAUSE VI.—As prostitution is practised by women as a means of livelihood, we recognise that its cause is economic and cannot be remedied by punishment, but if at the present time it is not possible to secure the repeal of all legislation which makes soliciting a punishable offence, we urge that this Clause, which is intended to increase the punishment for soliciting be amended, so that the offence of soliciting shall apply equally to men and women, and that no person shall be convicted unless evidence is given by the person to whom the solicitation has been addressed.

STATE REGULATION

To protect soldiers and sailors from venereal disease, which unfits them for War service, there is on the one hand a demand for the State regulation of prostitution; and on the other hand, a demand for more severe harrying and punishment of the unfortunate outcasts who have fallen to the hideous traffic of the streets as a means of livelihood.

Yet at the same time, the Naval and Military Authorities are encouraging, nay, even urging the soldiers and sailors into prostitution. We learn from the elder sister of a young Naval officer to whom she has been as a mother, that when the men go on leave the ship's doctor stands on the gangway calling out to them that if any of them go with women whilst they are on shore, they must come to him for treatment when they return, or there will be trouble.

We learn from the elder sister of a young officer in a Canadian regiment that when he first went on leave in this country he was supplied with preventives against venereal disease. He refused them indignantly, but his superior told him with a smile that he *must* take them.

The women who have given us this information are both of high character and wide experience. We refrain from giving their names only because to do so might cause punishment to fall upon their brothers.

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Chair: Miss O'Callaghan

QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

THE SUFFRAGE SITUATION

UNFORTUNATE TACTICS

At a meeting in the Albert Hall, Manchester, on March 3rd, addressed by Mrs. Fawcett, Sir John Simon, Mr. J. R. Clynes and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, a resolution was adopted urging the Government to introduce a Bill based on the recommendations of the Speaker's Conference, provided that it contained as an integral part provisions for the enfranchisement of women, notwithstanding that such a Bill would not confer the suffrage on the terms of equality for which the meeting stood.

Some of the supporters of such resolutions are willing to accept any compromise on the suffrage question, provided that any section of women, however small, is enfranchised: others assert that once a Government measure has been introduced it can be widened by subsequent amendments. The difficulty of forcing amendments upon the Government once a Bill has been drafted is extreme. Moreover, we believe that unless Adult Suffragists are prepared to make their demand clearly and boldly they cannot hope to achieve success.

* * * *

9 Corporation Chambers, Corporation Street, Bolton.

Dear Editor,—The most obvious thing at the demonstration in favour of Women's Suffrage held in Manchester last Saturday was the entire lack of enthusiasm shown for the proposed franchise. It was deeply pathetic to note the half-hearted pleas for accepting the offer of a limited electoral basis in contrast with the applause which greeted any allusion to the ridiculous injustice of the proposal. Both Mrs. Lawrence's and Miss Ashton's speeches would have been far more applicable to a motion demanding that if there is to be a limit of age at all it should be the younger women who should be enfranchised. On Sir John Simon's own showing it is the younger women who have been called into the great fields of world activity, and, as Mrs. Lawrence eloquently pleaded, we must avoid making the historic blunder of being too late. Yet, if only the older generation of women is to have electoral power, will not this be the very same blunder? Is it not the truth that we are in the present national and international mess, not only because of exclusive male power, but also because of this idea of age being wisdom? More, at the very time that the vote is being denied to women under thirty-five it is being extended to men under twenty. So, on this principle, by the time the younger women of any generation are enfranchised, we shall be asked to give votes to all boys in order to preserve the male "balance of power." Let us not too readily haul down the flag on which we have embossed the claim "on the same terms as it is, or may be, granted to men." To do so seems to indicate that women, too, are going to be guided by political expediency instead of by principle. If there is no other way at the last, then we could accept it under protest, but meanwhile let us persist in our claim for equality of right, and we shall, I believe, get it.—Yours, etc.,

JOHN DARBYSHIRE,

Hon. Sec. Manchester Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage.

* * * *

Mrs. Fawcett writes to the Press stating that she has received a very generous letter from Sir West Ridgeway, withdrawing his former opposition to women's suffrage and telling her that henceforward we may count on his "assistance in carrying any well-devised scheme for extending the suffrage to women who have reached years of discretion."

What are "years of discretion"? Do Sir W. Ridgeway and Mrs. Fawcett agree that they are reached at 30 or 35?

THE FOOD PROBLEM

Potato queues, marshalled by the police, are the latest War sensation. In some districts dealers supplied only 2 lbs. to each customer, in other districts only 1 lb. was supplied. "I always buy 12 lbs. on Saturday," said a despondent woman. "What shall I do?" "Go to another shop," someone replied, and so she probably did. The farmers are believed to be holding back potatoes till April, when they will be able to charge another £1 per ton. Many shops have been besieged, and Liverpool farmers have declared themselves too busy to bring potatoes to market. Railway men tell us that immense loads of potatoes are waiting for delivery until the prices rise. We hear of large stores of sugar in the dock warehouses being eaten by rats, running away in moisture, or being thrown into the river. Gambling in supplies could be stopped by nationalisation, and a fair distribution could be secured by rationing. But the only way to avoid the shortage is to stop the War. Why not stop the War now, before the scarcity is desperate?

BERNARD SHAW'S JOY RIDE IN HELL

Mr. Bernard Shaw has been on what he calls a joy ride to the front. Here are two glimpses of his impressions: "A man lying by the roadside was not a tramp taking a siesta, but a gentleman who had lost his head." "I am bound to state plainly, as a simple fact to be exploited by devils or angels, according to its true nature, that I enjoyed myself enormously."

We are bound to state plainly our view that the front is no place for joy-riding, and that those who wish to obtain really valuable impressions should take a hand in the trenches.

WOBBLY LIBERAL SUPPORT FOR IRELAND

The "Daily Chronicle," one of the foremost Liberal newspapers, says that when Home Rule comes: "Ireland must be treated as an organic whole, full provision being made for the protection of the minority, either in the shape of extra representation in the Irish House of Commons or in the creation of a strong Second Chamber."

This is typical of the bold Liberal Party, which shouts for the abolition of the House of Lords on platforms, but in practice works for the further bolstering up of the non-representative Second Chamber system. The "Chronicle" appears unable to realise that there are other parties in Ireland beside the orthodox Home Rulers and Nationalists.

THE AMERICAN SITUATION

Pacifists have rested much hope on President Wilson, though the resignation of the pacifist, William Jennings Bryan from the Wilson administration was an indication that all was not made plain to us, and now the United States is faced with the immediate probability of War, a probability so strong that it seems almost a certainty. The other day President Wilson announced that he had the constitutional power to arm merchantment and to take any other warlike steps that might seem necessary, and that he had come to ask the assent of Congress merely as a formality. But now it is discovered that President Wilson cannot act without the authority of Congress. The men who talked out the President's Armed Neutrality Bill on March 4th, are represented as being pro-Germans acting on behalf of the German-American population, but the names of those who seem to have been most prominent—La Follette, Stone, Norris, Cummins—obviously point to their having sprung from the Allied nations. La Follette, the leader, has long been prominent in American politics, and is not altogether unknown even here. He was the leader of the Insurgents within the Republican Party, who during the Presidency of Taft, emerged as the new Progressive Republican Party. The members of this party, headed by La Follette, made war on the Trusts and Monopolies, and preached the public ownership and control of what they term public utilities, railways, trams, mines, gas, electricity, water, and so on. La Follette was adopted by the Progressive Republicans as prospective candidate for the Presidency in the election of five years ago, but Ex-President Roosevelt came in at the last, and by capturing a section of the Progressive Republican Party deprived the La Follett candidature of any effective possibilities. La Follette is not a Socialist: in this country he would be regarded as an advanced Radical, somewhat more advanced perhaps than any Radicals that we have. His daughter Fola La Follette is active and popular in the American Women's Suffrage movement.

POLITICS OF THE PURSE

How unfortunately political agitations are controlled by self-interest is evidenced by what is happening in regard to the Indian import duty on woven cotton material which is to be applied to Lancashire goods. Mr. Chamberlain, who has raised the import duty from 3½ to 7½ per cent., is the son of the great exponent of Colonial Preference, and is an active member of the school which professes to regard the tariff wall against the foreigner mainly as a blessed means of binding the Empire together by allowing Free Trade only within its borders. The Tory excuse for putting up the import duty within the Empire is the "spontaneous" offer of India to contribute £100,000,000 to the cost of the War. The spontaneity of an offer made by one British Government Department to another is somewhat open to question, but Mr. Chamberlain finds the pretext convenient because he is engaged in securing the industrial development of India in the interest of Western capitalists, and perhaps, too, because the Tory party has no love for the Lancashire Liberals.

The position of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce is no less interesting. Its members were elected as advocates of Protection, the Free Traders having been routed, but, as this particular piece of Protection affects them adversely, the Protectionist members of the Chamber are opposing it as vigorously as are the Free Traders.

As for the Free Trade cotton manufacturers of Lancashire, when the Indian import duty of 3½ per cent. was set up in 1890, their protests were silenced by the provision of an Excise duty of 3½ per cent. on cotton goods manufactured in India, and it is certain that if the Government will now raise the Indian Excise duty to 7½ per cent. the Lancashire manufacturers will forget their present solicitude for "the poor Hindu," whom they now plead will have to pay more for his clothes.

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PARLIAMENT AS WE SEE IT

February 27th.—A number of questions were asked as to the refusal of the War Office to utilise the services of Mr. Barker and other experts in osteopathy and manipulative surgery.

Mr. Macpherson explained that as these men were not registered the War Office was precluded by the Medical Act from employing them. The British Army is in this respect exposing itself to world-wide ridicule!

* * * *

Sir F. Winfrey stated that the guaranteed minimum of 25s. to agricultural labourers is not necessarily in cash; it is inclusive of allowances!

What about the Truck Act?

FRIENDLY ALIENS.

In reply to Sir Henry Dalziel, Mr. Bonar Law stated that the Russian and British Governments had agreed that men of military age should be given the choice either of joining the military forces in this country or of returning to Russia for "military service." The right of proceeding to a neutral or other Allied country is denied, and no conscientious objection is recognised. The French Government has decided not to interfere with friendly aliens. Britain has lost the right to her claim that slaves who come here are made free.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

On the ground that the subject is an "unpleasant one," the Government moved that this Bill be committed to a Standing or Grand Committee. Mr. Dillon urged that this question would affect a large number of people, some of them the most defenceless of the community, and that it ought not to be dealt with in the dark. The House divided, with the result that 91 were opposed to sending the Bill to a Committee, whilst 144 supported the Government's proposal.

* * * *

On the motion to pay the Director-General of the Ministry of National Service £2,000 a year, the protests and questions of many Members drew from Sir George Cave the admission that there is to be also a Parliamentary Secretary to the new Ministry at a salary of £1,500 a year. It was further disclosed that the expenditure of the new Department will be mixed up with the War Credits, so that no one will be able to make a rough estimate as to what is being spent, and that no Estimates will be presented.

Mr. Leif Jones pointed out that Parliament had lost control of the expenditure over the Army and Navy, and that it was also losing control over the expenditure on the Civil Service. Sir George Cave uttered a platitude which the Government forgets where the rank and file of humanity are concerned: "It is hard work . . . and proper remuneration must be paid."

NATIONAL SERVICE BILL.

The Ministry of National Service Bill was considered in Committee. Sir C. Hobhouse moved that it should only apply to persons between 18 and 55 years. He urged that girls of 17 ought not to be taken from their homes for fear of demoralisation, adding that "there are complaints in every newspaper as to the conduct of some of the younger girls." He seemed to regard the morals of boys as being less easily undermined or of lesser importance, but complained that as, if the War should continue, they would be taken at 18 for the Army, the time spent in training them would be wasted. People over 55, especially, would be difficult to train, and not physically strong.

Mr. Tennant, whose wife, with Miss Violet Markham, is at the head of the Women's Department of the Ministry of National Service, declared that the domestic arrangements and proper care of the young women and girls was the primary concern of those responsible, and that it was "childish" to suggest otherwise. Already hostels were provided for the women munition workers at Woolwich and elsewhere, and "lots of these girls are from 16 to 17 years old."

Sir George Cave said it was not intended to enrol boys under 18, that the Bill was voluntary, and that the Director of National Service had not addressed his invitation to women as yet. He would be surprised if, when the invitation was issued, it would be to girls under 18 years.

Colonel Seely thought the earliest age for women should be 25. Did Members remember the proposal of the Speaker's Conference to give votes to some women at 30 or 35? The amendment was withdrawn.

COMPULSION.

Great exception was taken to giving Mr. Neville Chamberlain the power to judge as to what is an essential trade. Mr. Dillon declared that no one man, even be he Hindenburg, Bismarck and all the great men of the world rolled into one, could do this. He pointed out that in Mr. Chamberlain's list of essential industries the cotton trade had been omitted. A man who did that could not be trusted. Sir C. Hobhouse moved to insert the word "essential" in the clause giving power to make the best use of persons "in any industry." Mr. Brace, a Labour Minister, and Sir George Cave both resisted the amendment, which Mr. Dillon described as "a humble amendment . . . an improvement, though very very slight, of this extraordinary measure." Mr. Dennis, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Pringle, Mr. Tyson Wilson, Mr. Watt, and Mr. Hogge, who called for the combing of the Army, supported the amendment. On a division 73 Members voted for it and 188 against. The votes against the Government are slowly growing.

The Government's promised amendment to prevent this Bill being used for industrial conscription was "That no such Regulation shall authorise the compulsory employment or transfer of any person in or to any industry, occupation or service." Colonel Seely had put down an amendment to leave out the words which would make it possible to confer powers upon the Director-General by Regulations under the Defence of the Realm Act. Colonel Seely expressed willingness to withdraw his amendment if Sir George Cave added to the Bill some form of words which would make it clear that the Director-General would not have the power to close down industries on a large scale. Sir George Cave continued the pretence that the Bill is all purely voluntary, and directly refused to withdraw the words giving powers under the Defence of the Realm Act, saying, "I feel that these words are so vital to the Bill that I cannot give them up." "The best guarantee" that he would give in regard to the closing down of industries was that no such drastic steps would be taken without the authority of the Cabinet.

Mr. Shortt and Mr. Dillon said that under the Bill as it stood it would be possible to exercise military discipline over the workers and to punish them by court-martial. Mr. Dillon said it was plain that the Government had in their minds some large and important powers which they desired to confer on the Director-General, and asked what these were. Mr. Roche, Mr. Anderson, and others repeated the question, but there was no reply. Sir G. Cave stated that volunteers under the Bill, except those controlled by the Munitions Acts or some special contract, would be able to terminate their service at any moment, but he added, "a volunteer who accepts the conditions of employment will be bound by the conditions of that employment like any man who voluntarily joins the Army." Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. Hogge read sentences from the agreement which volunteers are called upon to sign: "I hereby agree . . . to undertake whole time work of national importance in the employ of any Government Department or other employer named by the Director-General of National Service, and to remain in such employment during the War, or for such shorter period as may be required by him. . ." Also "any question arising on these terms and conditions shall be decided by a Commissioner or other person authorised to act by the Director-General, assisted by assessors representing employers and employees, and I agree to accept his decision as final and binding on me." Any worker who signs such a contract is surely a fool.

Mr. Anderson said that if he could get anyone to tell with him he would divide against that part of the Bill which brought in the Defence of the Realm Act. Mr. Watt joined with him, but only 47 Members voted with them, 124 supporting the Government.

Mr. Watt moved an amendment refusing power for the compulsory stoppage of any trade, business or industry. Sir George Cave opposed this on the ground that the Government already had the power to do this by Order in Council, and intends to retain the power. The amendment was negatived without a division.

Sir C. Hobhouse moved that a schedule of trades to which labour was to be transferred should be laid before the House ten days before such transfer. He withdrew the amendment on a promise that the Government would consider the point. Mr. Leif Jones secured the acceptance of an amendment that the National Service Estimates should be laid before the House in order that the work of this Ministry might be debated, but Sir George Cave made it plain that these would only be Token Estimates giving no information.

IRELAND.

Mr. Dillon moved that the Bill should not extend to Ireland. Mr. Duke urged that it was necessary in the interests of Ireland, whilst Mr. Cecil Harmsworth appealed to the Irish Members not to press the matter to a division. Mr. Dillon replied that Irish labourers in this country are liable to illegal arrest under the Military Service Act and otherwise are subject to insult because they have not been conscribed. Only 34 Members voted for the amendment.

* * * *

February 28th.—Captain Bathurst said that the Food Controller several weeks ago appointed a Committee to prepare a scheme for compulsory rationing which can be put into operation when necessary.

A stream of questions followed on potatoes and sugar. Mr. Will Thorne gave a specific case of a shopkeeper refusing to sell potatoes without greens last Saturday, but, whilst declaring this illegal, Captain Bathurst merely asked for "further information." As to sugar, he could say nothing definite except that the matter is held up because Lord Devonport is ill. The Government will never take the matter seriously till the people make them!

* * * *

Mr. MacCallum Scott again drew attention to the injustice by which the wife and children of a sailor in the lower ratings get 6s. a week less than the private soldier's family.

Mr. MacCallum Scott also pointed out that soldiers and sailors lose their votes if their dependants go into Poor Law infirmaries, because, whilst separation allowance is stopped for the period, the Guardians do not get the money. Most hospitals being full of soldiers now, Poor Law institutions are usually the only ones available.

* * * *

Mr. Duke admitted that four Irish youths were fined £10 or three months in default for "singing disloyal songs and making use of disloyal expressions."

Oh, banished liberty!

* * * *

Mr. Buxton and Mr. Jowett asked whether anything has been done in regard to establishing here the French system of Parliamentary Committees. Mr. Bonar Law replied: "It would be impossible to adopt it."

* * * *

The callous refusal of leave to Gunner G. H. Cloke to see his dying wife and after her death to make arrangements for their baby was mentioned by Mr. R. McNeill. Mr. Macpherson made the exasperating reply that he had "no doubt the case was receiving every consideration."

* * * *

Mr. Glanville complained that large numbers of skilled men are taken into the Army and afterwards found to be medically unfit and placed in labour companies, where they get no opportunity of doing useful work. He stated that 2,000 such men, some of whom have been applied for for munitions, are stationed at 51 Calthorpe Street, W.C. Notice had been given of the question, but the War Office was still making inquiries.

* * * *

In reply to Mr. Anderson, Sir G. Cave stated that the recent Regulations under the Defence of the Realm Act, permitting the authorisation of a police-constable or other person to visit meetings gives no power to stop or disband such a meeting. Neither does it contemplate interference with trade union or other lawful organisations, but only meetings where offences may be committed against the Defence of the Realm Regulations. Peace meetings and meetings in defence of liberty we suppose to be included in this definition.

* * * *

Mr. Churchill and Admiral Sir H. Meux carried their personal recriminations a stage further.

* * * *

Mr. Wing moved that the House of Commons observe the same rules as to the sale of intoxicating liquors as are imposed upon the general public.

Sir Frederick Banbury, who cited an occasion last year when he was compelled to wait for his dinner till ten o'clock, complained that members would gain nothing but "a little advertisement."

TO INDEMNIFY WHOM?

The Solicitor-General introduced a Courts (Emergency Powers) Bill. The principal object of this Bill is to set aside the Acts of 1782 and 1801, under which members of Parliament are disqualified from entering into contracts with the Government. Clause (a) of this Bill is retrospective, and indemnifies any Members who have entered into contracts with the Government; Clause (b) deals with the future, and limits the alteration of the law to property requisitioned by the Government. Members urged that this Bill must be brought forward to whitewash some particular law-breakers, and that the House ought to know the particular case before assenting to the Indemnity Bill. The Solicitor-General neither denied nor admitted the charge.

March 1st.—Mr. Roberts stated that very drastic steps will shortly be taken to restrict newspapers. Does he mean we shall all be obliged to read "National News"?

* * * *

Excisions in the Dardanelles Royal Commission Report have been made at the request of various foreign Governments, although such excisions are a breach of British law.

ARMY ESTIMATES.

Mr. Forster gave some account of the vast War organisation which has been created. Four thousand miles of railway had been constructed in the various theatres of War, 105,000,000 yards of khaki, and 115,000,000 yards of flannel have been manufactured, or enough to go four and a half times round the earth at the Equator. Arrangements to prevent waste had now been made which would effect savings of about £4,000,000 a year. Unused fat was collected from the camps, and used to make glycerine, which was sold to the Ministry of Munitions at £50 a ton; if bought from America it would cost £240. Women's part in the War was great and growing.

Colonel Sir Matthew Wilson, just returned on leave, stated that the troops are growing potatoes in the Eastern theatre of War.

Mr. Tennant said: "The business of War, after all, is not really so unlike other business." Indeed, an appalling aspect of permanency has clothed all connected with the War, and peace still seems very far away!

* * * *

Brigadier-General Croft urged that still more men are needed at the front, and that they must be taken from the forces reserved for home defence. They must be replaced, he said, by an organised armed "volunteer" force. This would be possible under National Service, which is a compulsory state—volunteering, in his opinion, is "sheer nonsense."

* * * *

Captain Guest desired that Indians and Africans should do all the manual labour at the front. Fifty thousand or 60,000 "natives" had been steadily employed during the past year; he wanted to extend the number, and also to bring the subject peoples from all over the Empire into the fighting ranks.

Mr. Macpherson said that, in his view, boys who enlisted under age, if they are released, should be made to refund the payments they have received during the time they have been in the Army. The inference is that boys enlist in order to get the Army pay, but surely even War Office officials know that more money can be earned outside.

* * * *

Mr. Nield moved an amendment urging the alteration and standardisation of Medical Boards, in order to prevent the recruitment of the unfit. He said that the Admiralty and the War Office have provided beds for nearly 5,000 men suffering from tuberculosis. These men ought not to have been passed as fit for service. He went on to quote dozens of individual cases in which unfit men had been taken. Mr. Snowden followed with other instances, detailing the miserable pensions awarded to these broken men.

* * * *

Mr. Anderson, Mr. A. Williams, and Colonel Hope voiced numerous hardships in respect of delays in paying separation allowances, rent allowances, hospital stoppages, and other matters.

* * * *

March 5th.—The protectionists were full of talk: they want this country to begin learning to grow sugar beet to keep out the German and Austrian manufacture. It is a funny thing to talk of learning to grow new things when we have not labour for the old. It is the same with toys: the Board of Trade organises a Toy Fair and schedules cotton as unimportant.

* * * *

Captain Bathurst said that there is an unprecedented scarcity of potatoes, not merely in the United Kingdom, but throughout the world. Of course there is a scarcity when so many men are fighting!

* * * *

Mr. Ginnell asked if a resolution passed by the Cork Corporation demanding representation for Ireland at the forthcoming Peace Conference was stopped by the Postal Censor. Mr. Macpherson said it had been allowed to go to the Pope and President, but not to the four enemy Embassies at Washington. How farcical!

* * * *

Mr. Macpherson stated that women have not yet been invited to volunteer for service with the Army. Yet the Press has reported that numbers of women have answered the "call."

AGRICULTURE.

The necessity of leaving skilled men at agricultural work was again urged by Mr. George Lambert. He ridiculed the proposal to have military agricultural companies of 15,000 men. "The farmer will have to learn the new drill book—'Form fours! Plough!'" Soon there would be no food in the country.

Major-General Sir Ivor Herbert protested that to talk about increased tillage was all very well, but the question of bayonets was far more important. The men necessary for 1918 and "possibly for a considerable time after that" should be considered. Do these militarists imagine that the War will go on for ever?

SALONIKA EXPEDITION.

Mr. Pringle attacked the waste of men and tonnage caused by the Salonika Expedition. He alleged that Lord Kitchener, General Munro, who was on the spot, and the present head of the General Staff were opposed to it.

Mr. Winston Churchill said that in 1915 "great and dazzling opportunities, all of which were lost," were presented to us in the Balkan and Turkish theatres of war. Now that Bulgaria had entered the struggle against us and Germany had got through to Constantinople and organised the Turks, larger armies would be needed than our shipping would enable us to carry. He urged the Government to bring the natives of India into the struggle over-land, professing to regard his proposal as a boon to India. The speech was typical of this irresponsible gambler in other people's lives, whose dare-devil escapades always end in disaster. He called for preparation for the campaign of 1918, saying: "You must use the manhood of the whole world: men of every race and clime must serve behind the lines and, where possible, within the lines, according to their quality, not in tens of thousands, but in hundreds of thousands."

Churchill is perhaps one of the maddest of the warmongers, but such men are driving the world to ruin.

Mr. Dillon called attention to the strictness of the censor since the new Government had taken office. The line of action seemed to be to suppress a correspondent who is telling the truth if it is unpleasant, and to encourage men who are telling falsehoods and keeping the country in a fool's paradise." He read a letter purporting to have been written by Lord Hardinge in July last to Sir George Buchanan, British Ambassador at Petrograd. This letter denounced the "Russian reactionaries" and McKenna and Bratiano, "who has always been a most evasive fellow."

Mr. Macpherson and Mr. Bonar Law replied for the Government, but gave no information.

THE
WORKERS' SUFFRAGE FEDERATION

To secure Human Suffrage, namely, a Vote for every Woman and Man of full age, and to win Social and Economic Freedom for the People.

Entrance Fee ... ... 1d.

Minimum Subscription... 1d. a month

I wish to become a Member of the W.S.F. and enclose.....subscription and entrance fee for.....months.

Name.....

Address.....

WHAT'S ON?

W.S.F. FIXTURES

OUTDOOR

FRIDAY, MARCH 9th.
Bromley District, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Bouvier.
SATURDAY, MARCH 10th.
Bromley District, 11.30 a.m., Miss Price.
Morpeth Street, Green Street, 2.30 p.m., Mrs. Boyce, Mr. Bloom.
SUNDAY, MARCH 11th.
Dock Gates, Poplar, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Boyce, Mr. Stanley James.
Osborn Street, Whitechapel, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Walker.
Hyde Park, 3 p.m., Miss Price.
Victoria Park, 3 p.m., Peace Meeting.
MONDAY, MARCH 12th.
Clock Tower, Burdett Road, 11.30 a.m., Miss Price.
TUESDAY, MARCH 13th.
Mile End District, 11.30 a.m., Miss Price.
THURSDAY, MARCH 15th.
Mile End District, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Bouvier.
FRIDAY, MARCH 16th.
Mile End District, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Walker.
SATURDAY, MARCH 17th.
Clock Tower, Burdett Road, 11.30 a.m., Mrs. Boyce.
Fire Station, Hoxton, 12.30 p.m., Mrs. Walker, Miss Beamish.

INDOOR

CHANDOS HALL "AT HOME," 21a Maiden Lane (off Bedford Street, Strand).—To-day 3.30 p.m., Miss Margaret Hodge, "The Position of Women in the Industrial World During the Last Two Centuries"; Mr. Maurice Hann, "The Evils of Shop Life." Chair, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst. March 17th, Mrs. C. S. Ganley, "Children's Care." Mr B. N. Langdon Davies, "A Democratic Programme." Chair, Miss Lynch.

BOW WOMEN'S HALL, 400 Old Ford Road, Bow.—To-morrow (Sunday), 6 p.m., Mrs. Bessie Ward, "The Relation of Conscription to Women"; Mr. L. Ginnell, M.P., "Irish Aspirations." Chair, Miss M. O'Callaghan. March 18th, Madame Lafitte Cyon, "Socialism in France." Chair, Mrs. Bouvier.

General meeting of the London section, Monday, 19th, at 8 p.m.

Books of fiction will be gratefully accepted for the Bow Library.

Friends and supporters will be pleased to hear that improved heating arrangements have been made at the Bow Women's Hall.

Meeting of Central Branch, March 21st, at 7 p.m., will be held at 29b Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.

POPLAR WOMEN'S HALL, 20 Railway Street., Poplar (opposite South Bromley Station, N.L.R.).—March 9th and 16th, 3 p.m., Meeting. Speaker, Miss Lynch. Wednesday, March 14th, at 8.15 p.m., Mr. John Scurr will lecture.

Admission free. All are welcome!

BROMLEY, 53 St. Leonard's Street.—March 14th, 3 p.m., Mrs. Nellie Best will speak.

PROVINCES

LEICESTER.—Special Branch meeting will be held at 88 Rutland Street, on Monday, March 12th, 7 p.m., to elect a new Secretary for the branch and discuss Annual Conference business, etc. Speaker, Miss P. Lynch.

BIRMINGHAM, Priory Rooms, Upper Priory.—Saturday, March 17th, 3 p.m., Miss Sylvia Pankhurst and Miss Margaret Haly.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

To-morrow, Sunday, 8.15 p.m., at Kingsley Hall, Bow, Miss Muriel Lester will speak on "Solidarity." Bar and open discussion 9.30 p.m.

March 13th and 16th.—Lectures on Sex Education by Norah March, B.Sc. For particulars apply to Miss E. Grassam, 16 Bond Street, Holford Square, W.C.

MUNICIPAL SUGAR FOR MOTHERS

By consent of the Food Controller, Rochdale Medical Officer will purchase sugar to be used solely for distribution at the maternity centres; each woman will have an allowance of ½ lb. a week at a charge of 4d.

This is a step in the right direction. Other maternity centres should follow suit. But the system is exceedingly imperfect. The weekly three-quarters of a pound is apparently intended to be consumed by the mother, but the mother will not reserve it for herself if the other members of the family are going short. Therefore, to ensure that the mother is to get enough sugar it is necessary to increase the amount in accordance with the size of the family. And again, why should the municipality confine its provision of an adequate quantity of sugar to women who are attending maternity centres?

All Societies are cordially invited to send in notices of forthcoming events for our "What's On" column. Fee, 1s. 6d. for twenty words and ½d. per word after.

PEACE MEETING
Victoria Park, To-Morrow
SUNDAY, 3 p.m.

Speakers:

Mrs. BOUVIER . Mrs. CRESSALL

W.S.F. BRANCHES

ARE YOU AN ACTIVE WORKING MEMBER?

LONDON

BARKING.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Langford, Ailsa Craig, 97 Essex Road.

BOW.—400 Old Ford Road, E. Hon. Secretary: Miss Stevens. Branch meetings will be held every second and fourth Monday. DREADNOUGHT sales week ending March 3rd, 617; Miss Harriet, 130; Miss O'Brien, 120; Miss Beamish, 100; Mrs. Holloway, 50; Miss Lynch, 44; Mrs. Green, 24; Miss Pankhurst, 16; Mrs. Savoy, 12; general, 121.

Ordinary branch meeting, Monday next, March 12th, 8 p.m. Will members please note these meetings (at which subscriptions due can be paid) will, in future, be announced in this column, as owing to the branch being now self-supporting, it is impossible to collect subscriptions, or post-card members.

BROMLEY.—53 St. Leonard's Street. Hon. Secs.: Mrs. Lansbury, Mrs. Wood.

CANNING TOWN.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Parsons, 94 Ravenscroft Road.

ENFIELD AND EDMONTON.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Beavis, 171 Church Street, Lower Edmonton.

LEYTON.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hart, 73 Calderon Road. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 52.

POPLAR.—Hon. Sec.: Miss E. Lagsding, 20 Railway Street. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 89; per Mrs. Shlette, 62; general, 27.

TIDAL BASIN.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Drake, 49 Crediton Road. DREADNOUGHT sales, 88.

ST. PANCRAS.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Redgrove, B.S.P. Hall, 44 Malden Road, Kentish Town. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 13.

WILLESDEN.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Sheppard, 141 Villiers Road. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12. Branch meeting, Monday, March 26th, 8 p.m., at 148-150 High Road.

PROVINCES

BIRMINGHAM.—Hon. Sec.: Miss A .F. Boden, 10 Sandhurst Road, Moseley. Four fortnightly lectures will be held in Stirchley Institute at 7.30 p.m. Miss Sylvia Pankhurst and Miss Margaret Haly will speak at the Priory Rooms, Upper Priory, Saturday, March 17th, 3 p.m.

Will members volunteer for giving out hand-bills at meetings, factory gates, etc., during the week?

Miss Haly's lecture on "International Problems" will take place on Wednesday, March 14th, at 7.30 in Stirchley Institute.

Donations for advertising meeting gratefully acknowledged: Miss Baker, 10s.; Anonymous, £1.

BRADFORD.—Hon. Sec.: Miss McHale, 12 Airedale College Terrace. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 26.

BRYNMAWR AND NANTYGLO.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hayward, Coedcae, Garn Fack.

BURNLEY.—Hon. Sec. pro tem.; Mrs. Mortimer Holden, The Nurseries, Accrington.

CHESTER-LE-STREET.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Faulkner, 14 Hilda Terrace, South Pelaw, Chester-le-Street.

CHOPWELL.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Bell, 62 Forth Street. Fortnightly meetings are to be held to discuss such books as "Woman and Economics," "Woman and Labour,' etc. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12.

CORNSAY AND QUERRIC.—Hon. Sec. pro tem.: Miss Ellis, Dundalk House, Neville's Cross. Branch meeting, Monday, at 197 High Street, Cornsay. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 30.

DONCASTER.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Kent, 32 St. Sepulchre Gate.

DURHAM.—Hon. Sec.: Miss C. Ellis, Dundalk House, Neville's Cross.

FERRYHILL.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Ruby Stoddart, 12 Hackworth Street, Dean Bank. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12.

HUDDERSFIELD.—Hon. Sec.: Miss Joan Edgehill, B.Sc., 123 Cowcliffe Hill.

LEEDS.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hunter, 7 Sugdenfold, Armley. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 72.

LEICESTER.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hill, 12 Sweetbriar Road.

MANCHESTER.—Hon. Sec.: Miss F. Wassilevski, 18 Broughton Street, N. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 26.

MEDOMSLEY.—Hon. Sec.: Tom Orr, Esq., 6 Derwent Cottages, Durham. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 24.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Hon. Sec.: Mr. Nicholson, 19 Alexandra Road, North Heaton.

PRUDHOE-ON-TYNE.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Parks, 4 Riding Terrace, Mickley Square. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 8.

PORTSMOUTH.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Clarges, 200 Westfield Road, E. Southsea. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 39.

ROTHERHAM, WAKEFIELD.—Organiser: Miss Stephen, 46a Spring Street, Huddersfield.

SOUTHAMPTON.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Samuel, 33 Mount Street. DREADNOUGHTS sold, 12.

YORK.—Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Hall, 43 Lowther Street.

SCOTLAND.

GLASGOW.—Hon. Sec.: Lachlan Smith, Esq., 126 Bothwell Street.

MR. GINNELL, M.P. AT OLD FORD

Members and friends should not fail to come to this Sunday's meeting at 400 Old Ford Road. Mr. Ginnell's address on "Irish Aspirations" will be full of interest, following, as it does, Wednesday's debate on the Irish question in the House of Commons, and also because of his intimate knowledge of the Sinn Fein movement.

DISTURBANCE IN VICTORIA PARK

With reference to the recent disturbance in Victoria Park, Mr. Fowler Shone writes:—". . . I had had a very successful and perfectly orderly debate the week before from the (so-called) "Christian Evidence" platform, and the chairman asked me to debate again the first day I could. When I got up last Sunday there was a shout of recognition and a lot of people came over from the other platform shouting, 'You shan't have a hearing.' . . . . It was the boys—who know as much about the rights and wrongs of the question as a horse—who injured me. . . ."

ST. STEPHEN'S SHOP, HOXTON

A Public Meeting will be held at St. Stephen's Shop, 85 Hoxton Street, to form a branch and open the shop on Monday, March 26th, at 8 p.m. Speakers, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst and others.

CONSCRIPTION OF WOMEN'S LABOUR

Women who intend to oppose this are asked to write to Mary, c/o the WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT Office, 400 Old Ford Road, E.

* * * *

The Leeds Branch of the United Garment Workers' has passed the following resolution:—"That this mass meeting of Clothing Workers realising that all men and women have an equal claim to the franchise, calls upon the Government to introduce, not a Registration Bill, but a Franchise Bill, to give a vote to every man and woman who has reached the age of 21 years.

Donations to be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Dr. Tchaykovsky, or to the Hon. Financial Secretary, Miss N. L. Smyth, 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E. All parcels to 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E.

GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED

GENERAL FUND.—Mrs. Emson, £5; The Misses Gliksten (monthly), £2; Mr. W. J. Woods, £2; Irene (monthly), £1; Mrs. Glassman (1s. weekly), £1; Mrs. Marks, 10s. 6d.; Miss H. E. Raisin (monthly), 5s.; Mrs. Spill, 2s. COLLECTIONS: Poplar Sale, £3 2s. 6d.; Bow Women's Hall (two), 17s. 3d.; Profit on Poplar Club, 11s. 6d.; Tidal Basin "At Home," 10s. 3½d.; Chandos Hall, 7s. 8½d.; Mrs. Bouvier, 7s. 7d.; Bow "At Home," 6s. 2d.; Mrs. Boyce (two), 3s. 1d.

DREADNOUGHT FUND.—The Misses Hoy, 4s.; Miss Newsome (monthly), 1s.; COLLECTION: Ten Poplar Members (farthing collection), £1.

LIBEL ACTION GUARANTEE FUND.—J. A. Morton, Esq., 5s.; Mrs. Todd, per Miss Pankhurst, 2s. 6d.

MILK AND GENERAL DISTRESS.—Messrs. J. Gliksten and Son (£2 2s. monthly), £12 12s.; Miss I. V. Yeoman (10s. weekly), £2 10s.; Mrs. Beatty Seaman, £2; per Miss Udny (monthly), £1 6s.; Henry Holiday, Esq., £1 1s.; Dr. Bramley Moore, £1; The Misses Mann (monthly)), £1; Contessa Isolani (monthly), £1; Miss Allen-Brown, £1; Nurse Hebbes (weekly), 12s.; Mrs. Emmens, 10s.; Mrs. Chesshire, 10s.; Mrs. Belk Smith, 10s.; Anon (Barbados), 5s.; Miss Crabb (monthly)), 3s. 6d.; Mrs. Trenel-tuch, 3s.; Mr. Dott, 2s. 6d.; "Don," 1s. COLLECTIONS: Profit on Nursery Concert, per Nurse Hebbes, £3 10s.; L.S.A. Tool Room, £1 9s. 1½d.; Misses E. Lagsding and L. Barker (Cubitt Town), 5s. 7d.

CLOTHES, ETC.—Miss Turner, Mrs. Parry, Mrs. Belk Smith, Mrs. Chesshire, Mrs. Thomas.

GROCERIES.—Hampstead National Food Fund.

MOTHERS AND BABIES

The Mothers' Arms, 438 Old Ford Road, Bow.

Day nursery from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Doctor's consultation and baby-weighing, Mondays, 2.30 p.m. Mothers and babies can consult Nurse at any time.

Dental Clinic Wednesday, March 7th, at 2.15 p.m.

Health Talks for Mothers are held the first and third Fridays in the month at 3 p.m., at the Mothers' Arms.

20 Railway Street, Poplar.
(opposite South Bromley Station).

Doctor's consultation and baby-weighing, Tuesdays, 2.30 p.m. Nurse may be seen at any time.

53 St. Leonard's Street, Bromley-by-Bow.

Doctor's consultation and baby-weighing, Wednesdays, 2 p.m.

All mothers and children are welcome.

Cost Price Restaurants at 400 Old Ford Road, and 20 Railway Street. Dinners from 12 till 2 p.m. daily.

WANTS.

Subscriptions to the milk and food fund. Doctoring and nursing can help little if mothers and children are unable to obtain nourishment that is ordered.

New laid eggs, barley, glaxo, virol, for invalids. Medicine bottles, clothing and shoes for adults and boys and girls of all ages.

For baby, four gowns, four barrows, two flannel bands, twelve napkins, three vests, and a cot blanket; for mother, two nightgowns, woollen shawl, three towels, two sheets, and a pair of pillow cases.

Growing plants, flowers and branches for all our centres and for the L.C.C. schools. We should be grateful to friends who would supply us regularly. We also need vegetables and fruit.

More cupboards are needed at all our centres.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

ADULT SUFFRAGE.—A review of the existing franchise anomalies with strong arguments for Votes for All. Published by the London Labour Council for Adult Suffrage.

Copies of this pamphlet 1d. each, or 9d. per dozen, postage extra from Hon. Sec., 400 Old Ford Road, E.

FAMILY LIMITATION DOCTRINE. Post free, 1½d. —Malthusian League, Queen Anne's Chambers, Westminster.

MONTESSORI METHOD—Vacancy for pupil teacher; fee, £5 5s. a term.—Apply, Miss Muriel Matters, The Mothers' Arms, 438 Old Ford Road, Bow, E.

SOUTHEND: Furnished Apartments, 8 minutes from sea and train; or Furnished House conveniently situated.—Mr. Warr, 8 Hastings Road.

TEACHER FOR MATRICULATION, must be good at Mathematics and English. Evening lessons required.—Apply, "Violet," this Office.

SUPERVISOR with workroom experience wanted.—Apply, Toy Factory, 45 Norman Road, Bow, E.

HAND-MADE UNDERCLOTHING. Soldier's wife, good needlewoman, desires work to do at home; good references. Women's nightdresses made from 2s. 6d.; babies' gowns from 1s. Mending and darning also undertaken.—Apply Box 20.

SUFFRAGE WORKERS should spend their holidays at "Sea View," Victoria Road, Brighton. Hostess, Miss Turner.

WANTED, strong new or second-hand Wringer for use at "Mothers' Arms."

W.S.F. Draw Competition on March 24th 1917, in aid of the W.S.F., "Dreadnought." and Propaganda Fund. Prizes: 1st, Gentleman's Gold Watch; 2nd an Alarm Clock; 3rd, Lady's or Gentleman's Umbrella; 4th, Bound Volume of "The Woman's Dreadnought." Entrance, 2d. Draw Secretary; Mrs. Drake, 49 Crediton Road, Tidal Basin.

Clippings of Material of all kinds (must measure at least 5 by 6 inches) can be used in our Toy Factory at 45 Norman Road, Bow, E., and will be most gratefully received if friends will kindly send them.

Charge for advertising in this column, 1d. per word; four insertions for the price of three.

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